

SOUTHERN POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY

SIS 4005 – Regional Studies/Russia
FALL SEMESTER 2009

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Thomas E. Rotnem

OFFICE HOURS: TTH 12:30-1:30, M 9:00-12:00

OFFICE: J-306

OFFICE PHONE: (678) 915-7523 (If no answer, PLEASE leave detailed message.)

TEXT/READINGS:

- 1) MacKenzie, David and Michael W. Curran. 2002. *Russia and the USSR in the Twentieth Century*, 4th edition. Wadsworth.
- 2) Shevtsova, Lilia. 2007. *Russia - Lost in Transition: The Yeltsin and Putin Legacies*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- 3) In addition, additional readings will be placed either on e-reserve *or* handed out in class during the semester. Students will be responsible for reading these articles, as well as the aforementioned text. (See syllabus for asterisked [*] items.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course catalog states that SIS 4005 “Focuses on the political, economic, and social forces within Russia *and/or* Eastern Europe.” That being the case, and due to time constraints, the instructor has determined this course will solely cover developments within “Russia” (broadly defined), from past to present.

The course provides a comprehensive examination of social, political and economic developments in Russia from 1917 to the present. It includes a brief discussion of the pre-revolutionary features of Russian political and social development on the eve of the historic events of 1917, the origination of the totalitarian Soviet political and economic model under Vladimir Lenin and Josef Stalin, the reform process underway in the latter half of the Soviet experiment, the collapse of the U.S.S.R., as well as the post-communist reforms of Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin. It is the instructor’s desire to spend approximately one-third of the semester covering the period since 1985.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR SIS 400X COURSES: Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an awareness of significant political and economic developments in the region studied.
2. Exhibit an understanding of the historical background in the region under study.
3. Demonstrate a knowledge of the variety of cultural expressions and social dynamics in the region considered.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the significant historic, social and political events that led to the 1917 Revolution.
2. Analyze the role of the Communist Party (Bolshevik Party) in Soviet political, economic and social development.
3. Understand the importance of Josef Stalin's "revolution from above" for the emergence of the totalitarian state.
4. Discuss the reform movements of the 1950s and 1960s, examining the various precipitants of these processes.
5. Identify the causes of the social, political and economic malaise of the late Soviet era.
6. Understand the significance of Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost*, *perestroika* and *demokratizatsiia*.
7. Identify the main theories explaining the demise of the Soviet state in 1991.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the contemporary scene through the reading and discussion of assigned articles.
9. Describe the institutional conflicts that gripped the post-communist state during the Yeltsin era (1991-1999).
10. Examine the inter-relationships among economic, political and social reforms in post-communist Russia.
11. Discuss the role of wealthy oligarchs and crime syndicates in undermining processes of economic and political reform.
12. Understand the causes of weakening Russian public support for democratization, market reform and a pro-Western foreign policy.
13. Analyze the successes/failures of President Putin in reforming the Russian economy and examine the increasingly authoritarian post-Soviet political space.
14. Identify various security threats Russia faces at the dawn of the 21st century, e.g., Chechnya, domestic terrorism, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, et cetera.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Lectures will be used together with class discussion. In addition, audio-visual materials will also be used to reinforce lectures and class discussions. Students **WILL BE EXPECTED to read**

the textbooks (and other assigned materials) and **be prepared to participate** in class discussion.

The questions for the exams will be drawn from readings and classroom lectures. [NOTE: While the readings and lectures are designed to complement each other, they do not cover identical material. Thus, in order to do well in this course, the student is *strongly* encouraged to both attend lectures and do all the readings. Please recognize that a *strong* relationship exists between attendance and class performance.]

EVALUATION:

Requirements:

1. Exams I, II, and III	60%
2. Research paper	20%
3. Map quizzes	5%
4. Attendance/participation & cultural assignments	<u>15%</u>
Total:	100%

EXAMS will include a variety of types of questions including some objective and essay (short identifications & essay) questions. (Dates of tests will be set no less than one week in advance.)

Two MAP QUIZZES will be given to students during the semester. Each map quiz may cover two separate maps (for a total of four maps covered).

RESEARCH PAPERS require that students choose a particular issue of current (or past) significance in Russian (or Soviet) politics to examine. This topic should be approved **in consultation with the instructor**. A typewritten, two-paragraph thesis statement must be submitted to the instructor by September 3, 2009.

These papers should be devoted to a specific feature or problem of the Soviet or post-Soviet Russian political system that the student believes demands closer scrutiny. Papers will be graded on the quality of research done, the style of writing, and evidence of critical thinking. In addition, in researching the term paper, each student should attempt to consult a significant number of sources, i.e., not less than fifteen newspaper or journal articles, books, et cetera. (More information on the *specific* style requirements of the paper will be passed out to students at a later date.)

Students should endeavor to meet with the instructor for topic consultations *as early as possible*. These term papers will be due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, November 24th, 2009.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION & CULTURAL ASSIGNMENTS require that students complete all assigned readings on time and to be prepared to add their thoughtful comments to class discussions. It is imperative that students prepare fully before each class session.

A significant portion of the student's grade will result from an evaluation of the student's record of attendance & participation, as well as *timely* completion of TWO additional cultural-themed assignments. These two review assignments will be based upon the student's viewing of two specific films during *either* normal class time *or* at a special evening viewing.

GENERAL POLICIES:

1. No make-up exams or incompletes will be given and no late papers will be accepted, except in cases of documented medical, family, or job emergency.

2. **Disruptive Behavior & Academic Dishonesty:** “A faculty member reserves the right to remove any student from his or her course if the student's behavior is of a disruptive nature or if there is evidence of academic dishonesty. In instances of disruptive behavior and/or academic dishonesty, the faculty member will discuss the circumstances with the student(s) before taking final action. In the event the student cannot be reached, he or she will be given the grade of "Incomplete" until such time as he or she can be reached. The student shall have the right of appeal of the faculty member's decision:

- first to the faculty member's Department Chair
- then to the appropriate school dean,
- and, if necessary, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs

Removal from a course under this provision will result in a grade of ‘F’. A grade of ‘F’ issued under these circumstances shall not be superseded by a voluntary withdrawal, and will be included in the student's cumulative grade point average calculated for graduation purposes” (Undergraduate Catalog, “Academic Regulations” section).

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in this morning class. Students engaging in disruptive behavior, e.g., talking during class, receiving cell phone calls, *sleeping/snoozing*, entering class late, leaving class early, surfing the Internet at non-class-related websites, etc., **WILL** be penalized. Such behavior is not only distracting to the instructor, but also is annoying to your colleagues. Should you have a problem or a particular extenuating circumstance, please discuss it with me at your earliest convenience.

3. In general, for every three *unexcused* absences received, a student’s final course grade will drop by one letter grade. In addition, *repeatedly* being late for class (unexcused) will cause the student to lose points. Students may be late for class *twice per semester*; beyond that, students will lose 3 points from the final grade for each tardy appearance.

4. **VISTA8:** Where possible, VISTA8 will be used by the instructor to: 1) deliver course-related information to students in a timely fashion; and 2) post lectures and other course-related reading material, assignments, or data. The instructor assumes that students are checking the site frequently for updates. The instructor also assumes that during the first week of class SIS 4005 students will make sure they are able to access this class through VISTA8 and have full functionality.

NOTE: In the event that a swine flu epidemic/pandemic interrupts normal university operations during the Fall 2009 semester, we will continue our class utilizing VISTA8. (Thus, it behooves students to take the VISTA8 tutorial, at their earliest convenience.)

5. **Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the counselor working with disabilities at (678) 915-7361 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

6. If you have a question, *please* ASK!

Grading Scale:

A= 100-90
B= 89-80
C= 79-70
D= 69-60
F= 59- 0

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER IN 2009:

August 25	--	This class begins
August 27	--	Drop/Add period ends
August 28	--	Schedules canceled for non-payment
October 13	--	Last Day to withdraw from class with a grade of "W"
November 26	--	Thanksgiving – No class!
December 10	--	Last Day of Classes
January 11, 2010	--	First Day of Spring Semester 2010

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE AND READING REQUIREMENTS

(Reading requirements are indented)

Weeks One/Two:

1. ***Introduction to Course - "Regional Studies: Russia"***
 - syllabus
2. ***Introduction to Region & Country:***
 - a. ***Brief Overview of Russian/Soviet/Post-Communist Russian History***
 - b. ***Four Domains of Change/Policy Challenges***
3. ***The End of Tsardom and the Marxist Challenge:***

READ: MacKenzie and Curran, Chapters 1-3

"The Communist Manifesto" (1848) – by Marx and Engels

Week Three:

1. ***The End of Tsardom and the Marxist Challenge continued:***
2. ***The Advent of the Bolshevik State:***

READ: MacKenzie and Curran, Chapters 4-8

Week Four:

Enemies of the People: Stalin & Company:

READ: MacKenzie and Curran, Chapters 9-11

“The Gulag Archipeligo,” Chpt. 3, by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Week Five:

Enemies of the People: Stalin & Company continued:

READ: MacKenzie and Curran, Chapters 12-14

“Totalitarianism,” by Friedrich & Brzezinski

** Tentative Week of Exam I **

Week Six

1. *The Post-Totalitarian Era: Khrushchev’s “Thaw”*

2. *The Post-Totalitarian Era: Brezhnev’s “Stagnation”*

READ: MacKenzie and Curran, Chapters 15-16 & pp. 343-357

Week Seven:

1. *Brezhnev’s “Stagnation” and Gorbachev’s “Revolution from Above”:*

2. *The Gorbachev Revolution: “Demokratizatsiia” and “Glasnost”*

READ: MacKenzie and Curran, Chapter 17 & pp. 315-325, pp. 358-366

Week Eight:

1. *The Gorbachev Revolution: “Perestroika of the Economy” continued:*

2. *Revolution from Below: Nationalism & civil society*

READ: MacKenzie and Curran, pp. 325-342

Week Nine:

1. *Revolution from Below continued:*

2. *The Soviet Experiment Ends, A New One Begins: Challenges Facing the New Russia*

READ: MacKenzie and Curran, Chapter 20-21

Week Ten:

Institutional Conflicts during the Yeltsin Era:

READ: MacKenzie and Curran, Chapter 21
Shevtsova, Chapter 1

Week Eleven:

- 1. Institutional Conflicts during Yeltsin's Era continued:***
- 2. Economic Reform & Social Consequences***

READ: Shevtsova, Chapters 2-3

***** Tentative Week of Exam II *****

Weeks Twelve/Thirteen:

- 1. Consequences of the Transitional Period: Weakening Public Support for Democracy, Market Reform and the West***
- 2. The Emergence of Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin: The Putin Era***

READ: MacKenzie and Curran, Chapter 22
Shevtsova, Chapters 4-9

Weeks Thirteen/Fourteen:

- 1. Oligarchs and the Russian "Mafiya": Constraints upon Economic and Political Reform?***
- 2. Elections and Parties under the New Regime***

READ: Shevtsova, Chapters 10-16
Rotnem, YUKOS Case Study
Khrushcheva, "The Inspector General"

Week Fifteen/Sixteen:

- 1. A Return to Authoritarianism in Putin's Russia?***
- 2. Russia in the World: The Bear Awakens***

READ: Shevtsova, Chapters 17-27
Kasparov, "Battling KGB, Inc."
Sestanovich, "Putin's Invented Opposition"
Aron, "After the Leviathan"

Exam III – (Last Day of Class, December 10th)

**** NOTE:** The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course. In view of the ambitious nature of the syllabus' course outline, **deviations *will undoubtedly* become necessary.** **